

Inspection of a school judged good for overall effectiveness before September 2024: St Pius X Catholic Primary School

Tennyson Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 4HY

Inspection dates:

8 and 9 October 2024

Outcome

St Pius X Catholic Primary School has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at the previous inspection.

The headteacher of this school is Sharon Derbyshire. This school is part of the Rosary Trust, which means other people in the trust also have responsibility for running the school. The trust is overseen by a board of trustees, chaired by Simon Fenning.

What is it like to attend this school?

Pupils are proud of their school and of their achievements. They relish learning and talk knowledgeably about their work. Pupils enjoy the many trips that the school provides. Visits to places such as the local university and the Globe Theatre extend the formal curriculum and help to make what pupils learn in class real.

Pupils experience a broad curriculum that is suitably ambitious. It covers the national curriculum fully and includes relationships education. Children in the early years get a firm start to their education. Pupils build on this sound start as they get older and many achieve well as a result.

The school provides many opportunities for pupils to develop their interests and talents. A wide range of extra-curricular clubs and activities, such as sports, drama and film making, are enjoyed by many pupils. This helps to develop their wider learning and prepare them for the future.

Pupils behave impeccably. This is because everyone supports the school's high expectations. Lessons are not interrupted by poor behaviour. Pupils are clear that bullying seldom happens but if it does, staff are quick to intervene and resolve any issues.

What does the school do well and what does it need to do better?

There are three features that sum up the school's work: the continuous focus on

improvement; the commitment to putting pupils' interests first; and an openness to new ideas. Leaders have developed a curriculum where learning is more than just what happens in lessons. The school seeks to develop pupils' appreciation of the wider world and their place in it.

The curriculum has been thoroughly revised and upgraded in recent years. This is especially so in English and mathematics, where it is carefully designed to build pupils' learning bit by bit. There is a strong focus on early reading and mathematics. This is based on a thorough understanding of how children learn effectively. Phonics is taught right from the start of Reception. All staff are trained in how to teach phonics and the new mathematics programme. They check pupils' fluency in both carefully. Where necessary, staff provide targeted support to help pupils catch up, including for pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND). As a result, gaps in pupils' learning are identified early and dealt with quickly.

Pupils read with increasing fluency, and develop a wide vocabulary, as they get older. They learn to write with growing eloquence and expression across the school. In mathematics, pupils learn the fundamentals so that they can tackle more complicated work as they move through the school. They are particularly enthusiastic about the way the school helps them learn their times tables successfully. Pupils, including disadvantaged pupils, achieve well in reading, writing and mathematics.

The development of the curriculum in subjects other than English, mathematics and science is not quite as advanced. A great deal of work has been done to identify what the school wants pupils to learn overall. However, staff do not always have enough subject knowledge to build pupils' learning as effectively as they might.

The school's approach to supporting pupils with SEND to access the curriculum successfully is effective. Pupils who need additional support are identified quickly. The school goes the extra mile to get appropriate support from external agencies and experts, such as speech and language therapists, when this is needed.

The wide range of trips and extra-curricular activities extend the more formal classroom learning effectively. The school has improved this area of its work significantly. Developments include the public speaking programme and opportunities to learn musical instruments. The school's personal, social and health education programme ensures that pupils are taught about relationships and how to keep themselves healthy and safe, including when online. Pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their lives.

The school promotes excellent behaviour and high levels of attendance most successfully. Attendance rates are carefully analysed to identify patterns. Attendance is improving year on year. New arrangements for managing behaviour are proving to be especially effective. However, the school is not complacent and is continually looking at what is working well and what can be improved. This includes the work of the governing body, which contributes very well to the school's continuing improvement.

Safeguarding

The arrangements for safeguarding are effective.

What does the school need to do to improve?

(Information for the school and appropriate authority)

- In subjects other than English, mathematics and science, staff do not always have the precise knowledge to ensure that pupils achieve as well as they could in these subjects. The school needs to make sure that staff have the expertise needed to teach effectively across the full range of subjects.

Background

Until September 2024, on a graded (section 5) inspection we gave schools an overall effectiveness grade, in addition to the key and provision judgements. Overall effectiveness grades given before September 2024 will continue to be visible on school inspection reports and on Ofsted's website. From September 2024 graded inspections will not include an overall effectiveness grade. This school was, before September 2024, judged to be good for its overall effectiveness.

We have now inspected the school to determine whether it has taken effective action to maintain the standards identified at that previous inspection. This is called an ungraded inspection, and it is carried out under section 8 of the Education Act 2005. We do not give graded judgements on an ungraded inspection. However, if we find evidence that a school's work has improved significantly or that it may not be as strong as it was at the last inspection, then the next inspection will be a graded inspection. A graded inspection is carried out under section 5 of the Act. Usually this is within one to two years of the date of the ungraded inspection. If we have serious concerns about safeguarding, behaviour or the quality of education, we will deem the ungraded inspection a graded inspection immediately.

This is the first ungraded inspection since we judged the predecessor school, St Pius X Catholic Primary School, to be good for overall effectiveness in October 2016.

How can I feed back my views?

You can use [Ofsted Parent View](#) to give Ofsted your opinion on your child's school, or to find out what other parents and carers think. We use information from Ofsted Parent View when deciding which schools to inspect, when to inspect them and as part of their inspection.

The Department for Education has further [guidance](#) on how to complain about a school.

Further information

You can search for [published performance information](#) about the school.

In the report, 'disadvantaged pupils' is used to mean pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND); pupils who meet the [definition of children in need of help and protection](#); pupils receiving statutory local authority support from a social worker; and pupils who otherwise meet the criteria used for deciding the school's [pupil premium funding](#) (this includes pupils claiming free school meals at any point in the last six years, looked after children (children in local authority care) and/or children who left care through adoption or another formal route).

School details

Unique reference number	147404
Local authority	Essex
Inspection number	10345514
Type of school	Primary
School category	Academy converter
Age range of pupils	5 to 11
Gender of pupils	Mixed
Number of pupils on the school roll	218
Appropriate authority	Board of trustees
Chair of trust	Simon Fenning
Headteacher	Sharon Derbyshire
Website	www.stpiusxchelmsford.co.uk
Date of previous inspection	Not previously inspected

Information about this school

- St Pius X Catholic Primary School converted to become an academy in February 2019. When its predecessor school, St Pius X Catholic Primary School, was last inspected by Ofsted, it was judged to be good for overall effectiveness.
- The school is part of the Rosary Trust, a Roman Catholic Multi-Academy Trust.
- The school does not use alternative provision.
- The last inspection of the school's denominational education and collective worship, under section 48 of the Education Act 2005, took place in May 2018. The next section 48 inspection is due by December 2024.

Information about this inspection

- Inspections are a point-in-time evaluation about the quality of a school's education provision.
- This was the first routine inspection the school received since the COVID-19 pandemic began. The inspector discussed the impact of the pandemic with the school and has taken that into account in his evaluation of the school.

- To evaluate the effectiveness of safeguarding, the inspector: reviewed the single central record; took account of the views of leaders, staff and pupils; and considered the extent to which the school has created an open and positive culture around safeguarding that puts pupils' interests first.
- The inspector visited a sample of lessons, spoke to some pupils about their learning and looked at a sample of pupils' work.
- Meetings were held with the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers. The inspector also met with teachers.
- The inspector met with representatives of the governing body, including the chair of governors, and spoke to the chair of the trustees.
- The inspector considered responses to the Ofsted Parent View survey, including the written comments. He also considered the responses to Ofsted's pupil and staff surveys.

Inspection team

Brian Oppenheim, lead inspector

His Majesty's Inspector

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